

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: JOSE CARLOS AYALA, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

THROUGH: JACK BROWAND, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: ARLANDRIA-CHIRILAGUA PLAN UPDATE; REQUEST FOR
ENDORSEMENT

ISSUE: Park and Recreation Commission consideration of the Draft Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan open space recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Park and Recreation Commission endorse the Draft Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan open space recommendations as consistent with the goals of the Alexandria Open Space Plan and Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

BACKGROUND: In fall 2019, the City launched a community planning process to update the 2003 Arlandria Neighborhood Plan with a long-term vision for land use, affordable housing, parks and open space, health and sustainability, and safety and mobility. In response to community input, the Plan places special focus on the preservation and expansion of housing affordability and the strength of this unique community and neighborhood business district. Updating the objectives and strategies of the long-term vision for the neighborhood is particularly important with the planned phased arrival of Amazon in Crystal City, and the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus and Metrorail Station in North Potomac Yard.

Community engagement in Arlandria-Chirilagua was conducted in Spanish first with English translation through a variety of in person and online events convened by the City and in partnership with neighborhood organizations. In addition, the City held a variety of in-person stationary and mobile pop-ups, open houses, and virtual meetings.

Community feedback was recorded through written and verbal comments received through all the venues as well as through three bilingual questionnaires distributed at key points in the process. The second and third questionnaires featured brief bilingual videos to ensure informed and substantive responses. Passive outreach to raise awareness and encourage engagement included display of posters throughout the neighborhood with directions for how to engage the planning team and provide comments via WhatsApp or other means. Information was also

posted on the project web page, City calendar; flyer distribution to area residential and office buildings; the City's eNews service; social media postings; and emails.

DISCUSSION: Feedback from the Arlandria-Chirilagua community over the early portion of the planning process informed development of Plan objectives which in turn served as the basis for developing draft Plan recommendations.

Planning Process Objectives:

- Preserve Arlandria-Chirilagua as a culturally diverse neighborhood by protecting residents' ability to remain in the community in the context of anticipated market pressures
- Support the existing commercial corridor, local businesses, and the community's access to daily needs
- Build on neighborhood walkability, safety, and mobility options
- **Connect and expand the open space network with more play areas and outdoor living rooms**

Community Priorities for Open Space in Arlandria:

During the community engagement process, many neighbors commented about how much they value open space and how existing or new parks could better serve the community and better suit the community's social and cultural context. The comments generally fell within the following three categories:

- Diversity of use: Parks should accommodate a diversity of active and passive uses and be able to function as outdoor social living rooms.
- Park Amenities: Parks should include supportive amenities, such as grilling and picnic areas, restrooms, recreation areas, water play, and lighting.
- Playspace: Parks should include playgrounds for children of all ages.

Open Space Analysis and Development of Draft Plan Recommendations

In addition to community input, staff considered the following approved open space documents as the starting point of the Plan's open space analysis:

- Existing Park Plans for parks within the Arlandria-Chirilagua plan area, including pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and Citywide parks
- Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan
- Alexandria Playspace Assessment

Taking into account community feedback and existing park plans, Staff also conducted an analysis to determine open space gaps in the neighborhood based on walking distance. The analysis estimated the walking distance from all residential locations to ensure that there is a park within a 5 minute walking distance from everywhere in the neighborhood. The analysis also considered gaps in access to playspace for younger children as studied in the Alexandria

Playspace Assessment. Finally, the analysis looked at areas for improving open space connectivity.

The Plan recommends supplementing the existing open space network with eleven new open spaces within the Plan area as depicted in Figure 1, ranging in size from pocket park to neighborhood park size. The new open spaces fill in gaps in the network, connect open spaces, enhance connectivity to Four Mile Run Park, and will feature a variety of park uses and amenities to serve the Arlandria-Chirilagua community. The new ground level publicly accessible open spaces will be provided with redevelopment, and will comprise approximately 4 net new acres of open space, in addition to open space already within the neighborhood. Redevelopment sites will also be subject to a 20% on site open space requirement to serve new development.

Draft Plan Open Space Recommendations

GATHER + PLAY

- Provide the at-grade publicly accessible open space network as generally depicted in Figure 1 and Table 1. The open space network should include a mixture of active, passive, natural, educational, physical fitness, cultural, and social elements for people of all ages and abilities. All open spaces should include amenities of some kind that enhance usability such as seating options, grilling areas, exercise and play equipment, and accessible restrooms.
- Each ground level open space depicted in Figure 1 will be made accessible and usable to the public through dedication to the City as a public park or provision of a perpetual public access and use easement.
- In coordination with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, parcels that redevelop adjacent to Four Mile Run Park and other publicly owned open space will not intrude into the adjoining public parkland. Redevelopment shall be consistent and compatible with the City's Open Space Master Plan and City Park Improvement Plans.
- All public open spaces in the neighborhood will be designed to be welcoming, open and accessible to all. To support safety in public parks, all open spaces will be designed in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Each block developed with a multifamily residential use will provide a minimum of 20% at- or above-grade public and/or private open space. The percentage will be based on the development block, excluding required streets. Blocks required to provide on-site publicly accessible open space as part of the Plan area's open space network depicted in Figure 1 and Table 1 are eligible for a one-for-one credit toward the 20% open space requirement. The design, configuration, and programming of open space will be consistent with the goals of the Plan and will be determined during the development review process.
- Accessory structures that support recreational uses and programming consistent with the intent of the Plan to enhance park users' experience may be provided within publicly accessible open spaces, subject to approvals through the development review process.
- Special events and community activities in support of the Plan goals may be held within publicly accessible open spaces subject to all applicable City approvals and permits.

- The existing community facility at 4109 Mount Vernon Avenue in Four Mile Run Park will remain, as recommended in the Four Mile Run Park Improvement Plan. To support the ongoing need for community/public facilities in Arlandria, future park planning will consider long-term replacement of the building.
- As part of redevelopment, properties adjacent to Four Mile Run will be responsible for providing the open space area and improvements recommended by the Four Mile Run Master Plan Restoration Plan.
- As part of new open spaces, parks and streetscapes, integrate recreational amenities, public art, and murals of scale that function as interpretive elements for the area's unique history and sustainable future. Incorporate historical markers and elements of the neighborhood history and culture to enhance the experience of users of the parks within the plan area. For historic interpretation recommendations, see Appendix X (Arlandria-Chirilagua Cultural History Report).
- Open Space #6 depicted in Figure 1 (parking lot located at 3850 Mount Vernon Avenue), or a portion thereof, is recommended to function as a communal gathering space within the commercial core.
- Open Space #11 depicted in Figure 1 is intended to provide connectivity between existing open spaces, and should include elements such as exercise equipment, a walking trail, and seating areas.

NEXT STEPS:

The draft Plan recommendations will be distributed in Spanish and English for public review and comment in September through early October. Comments from the community as well as the Park and Recreation Commission will inform the final draft Plan scheduled for Planning Commission and City Council consideration in November.

Attachments:

1. Figure 1: Open Space Network
2. Table 1: Open Space Table

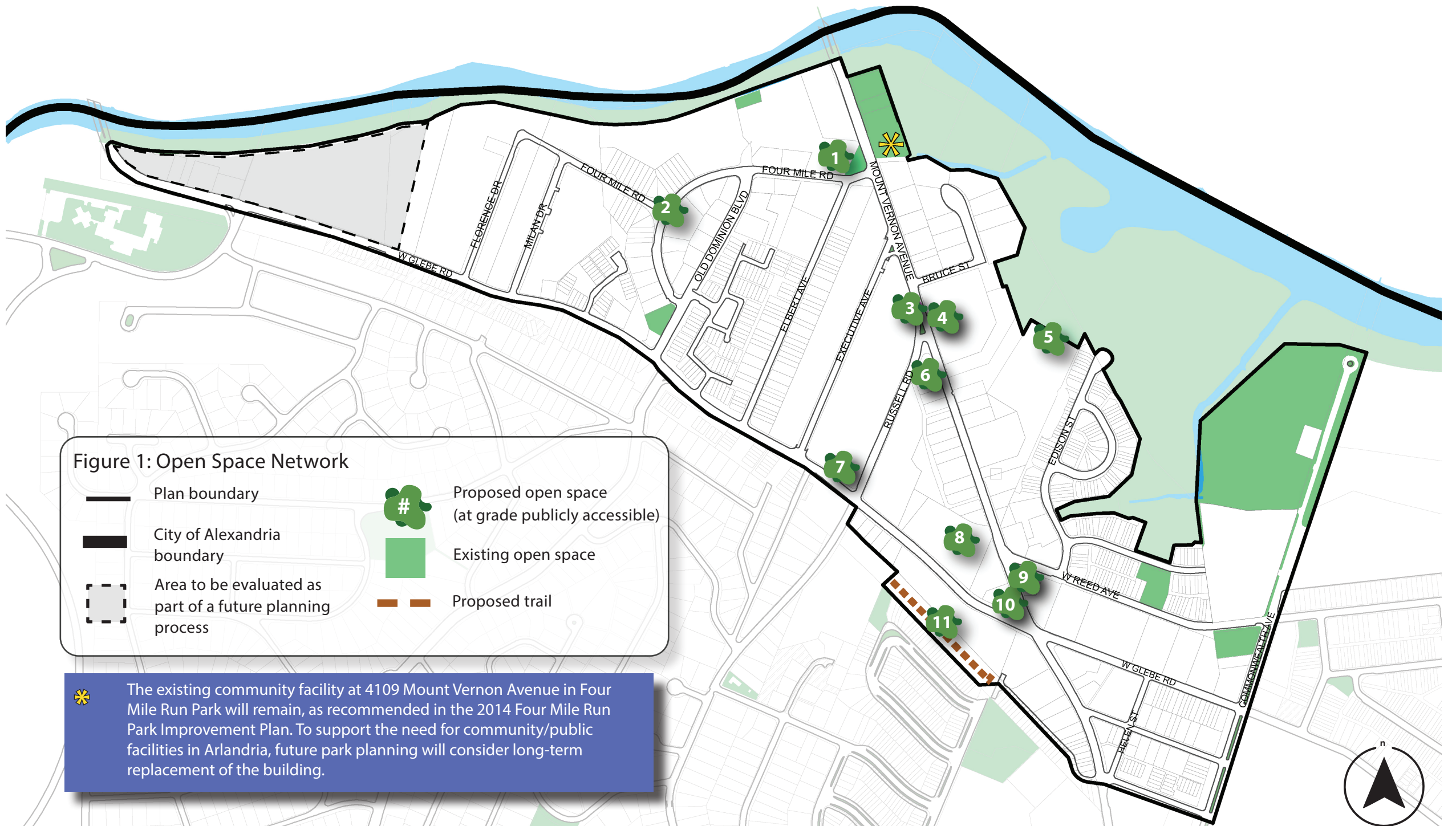


Table 1: Open Space

#	Location	Typology	Size
1	Park Vue	Neighborhood Park	Tier 1
2	Near the Four Mile Rd. & Notabene Dr. intersection	Neighborhood Park	Tier 1
3	Mount Vernon Ave. & Russell Rd. intersection traffic island & Presidential Greens	Neighborhood Park	Tier 1
4	Mount Vernon Village Center	Urban Plaza	Tier 2
5	Birchmere site	Neighborhood Park	Tier 2
6	Mount Vernon Ave. Shops parking lot	Urban Plaza	Tier 1
7	Presidential Greens	Neighborhood Park	Tier 3
8	AHDC West Glebe Rd. & Mount Vernon Ave.	Neighborhood Park	Tier 2
9	Near Mount Vernon Ave. & West Reed Ave. intersection	Urban Plaza	Tier 1
10	Near Mount Vernon Ave. & West Glebe Rd.	Urban Plaza	Tier 3
11	Behind Food Star International Supermarket	Neighborhood Park	Tier 3

Notes :

- Design, configuration, and programming will be determined as part of the development review process.
- Open space sizes will range from approximately .1 to 1.7 acres as follows :
 - Tier 1 = 0.1 to 0.3 acres
 - Tier 2 = 0.4 to 0.7 acres
 - Tier 3 = 0.8 to 1.+ acres